

Participating in Special Events

Another component of public education campaigns is the creation of special events around an issue.

Special events can include participation in fairs or festivals, neighborhood programs, or educational classes. These events not only help to educate consumers, but they provide an opportunity for the media to cover the issue being highlighted. The types of special events that can be included in a public education campaign are many and varied.

The best way to get involved is to sign up for a local event that has been ongoing for several years. These events are usually well planned and draw larger crowds. Ask other people what events they have found valuable and which ones are well organized. These events will be a good opportunity to see how special events work, and will give you the chance to get involved. As you participate in more events, you may want to try to create your own special program. Bringing in partners can give you access to more resources, and will provide you with more help.

As you consider participating in special events, keep in mind the level of effort that goes along with this aspect of public education campaigns. Choose events that you feel comfortable doing, given

the amount of time you have to get involved. Staff time to plan, attend meetings, and participate at the event all need to be considered before committing to an event. If an event requires a investment of staff time or cost to the district, make sure it's appropriate for your issue or campaign (see next page).

Evaluation of Method

Pros: This effort can bring together the POTWs, the consumers, and the community while working toward a common goal. These one-day events are also good media opportunities to bring attention to your facility, your partners, and pesticide issues.

Cons: It takes a significant amount of time to prepare and implement these types of events. By planning ahead and working with other community partners, the amount of time and resources can be greatly reduced.

Exhibits at Environmental Fairs or Other Events

One of the easiest ways to get involved in community special events is to sign up to be an exhibitor at a local fair or festival. There are year-round opportunities to get out into the community and to educate residents about pesticide use and the impact on water quality. Ask other community organizations about annual celebrations and events that might be beneficial. Keep a calendar list of these activities so you have plenty of time to plan for the event. Call agencies that organize events and ask to be put on their mailing list.

As you begin to take part in the events, keep a master calendar that lists the date, time, location, and who from your organization will be attending. This master calendar will help you schedule peoples' time, but will also serve as a quick reference for anyone needing information about the event.

When you sign up for the event, you will usually be assigned a table and chairs that will be your booth or station for the event. Be sure to ask if these will be provided for you, or if it is necessary to bring your own table and chairs. Your next task is to assemble items for display. These can be pictures, diagrams, charts, or any other information important to educate consumers. Consider bringing visual items such as water-testing kits, fresh plants and any other materials that may help attract consumers to the booth.

It is also a good idea to have handouts and materials that you can give to consumers. At many of the fairs, attendees get bags to gather information to read later. Use the brochures or flyers in this workbook as handout materials. Be sure to include bookmarks for kids.

Decide if you will offer some type of activity at your booth. It is important to catch the interest of consumers. This is an especially good idea if the event is targeted toward youth. Ideas range from having a coloring station related to integrated pest management (featuring, perhaps, drawings of "good bugs") to face painting.

Evaluation of Method

Pros: Events give you a chance to meet directly with consumers and to provide them with very specific information.

Cons: There is a time and possibly a significant cost (for example, handouts, promotional material) commitment involved with participating in events. Also, there are other competing activities vying for consumer attention.

Neighborhood Clean-Up Days

One of the most effective places to distribute public education information is in the neighborhood environment. Neighbors talk to one another over the fence, share gardening tips, and often share information on where to get products and how to dispose of them. Neighborhoods lend themselves to a clean-up day where residents can clear their cupboards of pesticide products.

This event, which would take place in fall or early winter to coincide with the end of the growing season, would be an excellent opportunity to educate residents on proactive steps to prevent pesticides from harming water quality. The day could be co-sponsored by a city or county waste collection department/hazardous waste collection facility to easily facilitate the actual disposal of materials.

Neighbors could undertake activities such as collecting old and unused pesticide products, stenciling prevention messages on curbs near storm drains, or scheduling gardening days for the spring when the neighborhood can share large quantities of pesticide products.

Your district could offer information on how to conduct a neighborhood clean-up day with the district or a city/county waste collection department serving as the disposal agency. The guide could be a one-page flyer that gives residents suggestions on coordinating their own neighborhood event. The flyer could be available through local stores, civic groups or by request from your facility.

There are several ways to promote this event to residents of the neighborhood where the clean-up will take place. Flyers can be posted in busy locations such as banks, post offices, churches, stores, and area schools. Visit garden centers in the neighborhood and ask if you can leave a handful of flyers promoting the event on checkout counters or on a community update table.

You can also enlist the help of the groups that are participating in the neighborhood clean-up to promote the event. Beginning two to three weeks before the clean-up date, ask these groups to distribute flyers at community meetings and gatherings. The flyers can be left on porch steps of homes in the neighborhood.

For local newspapers, contact the calendar editor and ask to have the event promoted as a public service. Most calendar sections will run a brief description of the event and a listing of where to call for more information at no charge. Be aware that many newspapers need information two to six weeks prior to the event date.

Evaluation of Method

Pros: This public education tactic is simple to promote, and includes proactive prevention projects.

Cons: Staff time and possible disposal costs.

Education Days at Local Retailers

Aside from point-of-purchase programs, there is an opportunity to conduct special courses at local retailers. These offer consumers the chance to learn about pesticide use and disposal where they are most likely to buy these products. Retail outlets for such classes include super stores, nurseries, drug and discount stores, and hardware/garden supply stores.

You must first determine what stores in your area have, or are open to having, consumer education classes or programs. Many of the larger retail chains have these types of classes to offer a service to their customers, and to help get people into the stores on specific days. Ask the manager of the store if it would be possible to add a class on gardening and environmental safety. If you don't feel that you could teach an entire class, ask other relevant organizations, such as the UC Master Gardeners, to join you on the program. If the retail manager isn't willing to add an additional class, ask if there is a class that you might be able to supplement with information about pesticide use. Offer to put the store's logo on the materials you use to promote the classes if this might encourage the store involved in the program.

Put together an agenda of what you could cover in a 20-minute presentation. Write an outline for the presentation

based upon the various aspects of pesticide selection, use and disposal, and about integrated pest management. As you construct the outline, keep in mind the average consumer viewpoint of these types of products. What do they want to hear about? What facts would concern them? Try to anticipate the questions you might be asked.

The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District has developed a manual, "How to Implement an IPM Partnership With Stores," with information on working with retailers. To obtain a copy of the guide, contact: Tim Tullis, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, 5019 Imhoff Place, Martinez, CA 94553-4392, or call (925) 229-7329.

Evaluation of Method

Pros: Education classes help you to reach consumers where they are buying pesticide products.

Cons: Planning for and teaching a class is a significant commitment. In addition, the retail outlet may not welcome a message focusing on IPM, which retailers may interpret to mean that less pesticides will be purchased.

Calendar of Major Events

Consider creating promotions surrounding special days. Following is a list of designated days that are recognized nationally and in California.

California County Fairs

This organization represents fairs throughout California. Its Web site lists county fair dates throughout the state and provides links to fairs with home pages.

Western Fairs Association
1776 Tribune Road, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: (916) 927-3100
www.fairsnet.org

Third week of March

National Poison Prevention Week

This week offers an opportunity to communicate a strong message about wise use, safe storage, and proper disposal of pesticides.

Poison Prevention Week Council
P.O. Box 1543
Washington, DC 20013
Phone: (301) 504-0580
Consumer Hotline: 1-800-638-2772
Information on poison prevention can be found on the Web sites of several organizations, including:

American Association of Poison Control Center

www.aapcc.org/Public.htm

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.aap.org/family/poisonwk.htm

American Pharmaceutical Association

www.aphanet.org/APhA/relations/poison.html

National Safe Kids Campaign

www.safekids.org

March 22

United Nations: World Day for Water

The UN General Assembly declared this observance to promote public awareness of how water resource development contributes to economic productivity and social well-being.

April

Keep America Beautiful Month

To educate Americans about their personal responsibility for litter prevention, proper solid waste disposal and environmental improvement through various community projects.

Keep America Beautiful Inc.
Media Relations Manager
9 W. Broad St
Stamford, CT 06902
Phone: (203) 323-8987
www.kab.org

April

National Lawn and Garden Month

National celebration of benefits of landscape and lawn care.

Association of Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA)
Phone: (703) 736-9666
Fax: (703) 736-9668

**Mid-April
National Garden Week**

To recognize 78 million Americans who enhance and improve the environment with their gardening efforts. Annually, the second full week of April.

National Garden Bureau
1311 Butterfield Road, Suite 310
Downers Grove, IL 60515
Phone: (630) 963-0700

**Last Friday in April
National Arbor Day**

Opportunity to learn about the importance of trees in American of life.

Committee for National Arbor Day
P.O. Box 333
West Orange, NJ 07052
Phone: (201) 731-0840

**April 22
Earth Day**

Attention to reclaiming the purity of the air, water and living environment. Earth Day activities are held by many groups on various dates, often on the weekend closest to April 22. Your local Sierra Club chapter may be a resource for information about activities occurring in your area.

**Early May
Drinking Water Week**

Part of the American Water Works Association "Blue Thumb Project," educational events are held to spread the word on how important knowledge and action are to safeguarding our public drinking water supplies

Blue Thumb Project
American Water Works Association
6666 West Quincy Avenue
Denver, CO 80235
Phone: (303) 794-7711
www.awwa.org/bluethum.htm

**May 8
No Socks Day**

If we give up wearing socks for one day, it will mean a little less laundry, thereby contributing to the betterment of the environment. Besides, we will all feel a bit freer, at least for one day.

Wellness Permission League
P.O. Box 1264
Lebanon, PA 17042-1264

**June 5
World Environment Day**

The anniversary of the opening of the United Nations Conference on the Human environment held in Stockholm in 1972, which led to establishment of the UN Environment Programme. The UN has urged marking the day with activities reaffirming concern for the preservation and enhancement of the environment.

United Nations
Department of Public Information
New York, NY 10017

August 1 – July 31

President's Environmental Youth Award National Competition

Young people in all 50 states are invited to participate in the President's Environmental Youth Awards Program, which offers them, individually and collectively, an opportunity to become an environmental force with their community. The program encourages individuals, school classes, schools, summer camps and youth organizations to promote local environmental awareness and positive community involvement.

Environmental Education Coordinator
US Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, #1707
Washington, D.C. 20460
Phone: (202) 260-8749
Fax: (202) 260-0790

**August
National Water Quality Month**

To increase the awareness of water as a precious resource and the importance of quality water in our everyday lives.

Culligan International
One Culligan Pkwy
Northbrook, IL 60062
www.culliganman.com

**late October
Los Angeles Garden Show**

Held on the 127-acre Arboretum of Los Angeles County.
Phone: (626) 447-8207, or look for information on the Internet:
www.arboretum.org/arboretum/events/



Calendars of other major events that offer promotional opportunities can be found on the Internet.

Sources of calendar events include:

GardenWeb

www.gardenweb.com

Has a "Calendar of Garden Events" that allows searches by date, location, and keyword.

Radio Online

[promonet.radio-online.com/
menu_f4.htm](http://promonet.radio-online.com/menu_f4.htm)

A private online service offers free access to a "Promotional Planner," with monthly events, special weeks, and important days, and some links to sponsors.

U.S. Novelty and Party Supply, Inc.,